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Carolina, had in his possession many curious forms of gold taken from this clay; one particularly so in the fact that it represented a beetle, and this similarity was not one that taxed the imagination at all to see the resemblance. It looked just as though the insect had been entombed in the clay, and the fine particles of gold had insinuated themselves into the cavity, to there aggregate and take the shape of the insect that it displaced, the lines of the sheath upon the back being as plainly delineated as they are upon a real insect. He had also gold in the form of leaves upon the laminae of slate, where the gold had drifted in between the foliations and taken the place of the cellulose. All the gold found in this clay was of a peculiarly fine quality.

To such as believe in evolution, the hypothesis seems possible, although we know in the laboratory that gold seems the most positively elementary substance of the metallic series. But many are led to believe that matter in the various forms of environment which we dignify with the name of elements has all been evolved from some simple form of substance that once composed the primeval cosmos. It seems to assume no more annihilation of elementary stability to assert that gold is of a derivative origin than it does to believe, as some now do, that bog iron ore (with iron a so-called element) is evolved from the life of the *Gallinella ferruginea*.

RECENT LITERATURE.

GURNEY'S RAMBLES OF A NATURALIST.¹—Although not specially interested in ornithology, we have been led on from chapter to chapter until all except the special notes, which take up a considerable portion of the book, have been conned over, and we have been led to regard the work as a very pleasant record, by an observing and evidently experienced ornithologist, of travels in some of the most interesting regions of the Old World. Mr. Gurney discovered but one bird absolutely new to Egypt, the lesser white-fronted goose, and this not a "new species." We much relish a foot-note on page 110, in which it is said that "quite seven tenths of the names which have been bestowed on 'new birds' within the last few years have already sunk into synonyms, and the advance of science has thereby been impeded." This evinces sound ornithology in the author! One chapter is mostly devoted to the sacred ibis. An extract will give some idea of the author's style. "Alas! alas!

¹ *Rambles of a Naturalist in Egypt and other Countries*. With an Analysis of the Claims of certain Foreign Birds to be considered British, and other Ornithological Notes. By J. H. GURNEY, JR., F. Z. S. London: Jarrold and Sons. 12mo, pp. 307. For sale by S. E. Cassino, Naturalists' Agency, Salem, Mass.

the sacred ibis is no longer found in Egypt. What would the shaven priests say if they could live over again? My humble opinion is that they would say that in their wild state they never were anything but rarities, and confirm the theory of Dr. Adams¹ that they were imported from the south. I look upon them as an imported exotic, for I cannot conjecture what natural cause can have operated upon them to produce their extinction, if they ever were natives. They were domesticated, in time they became totally dependent on man, Egypt was conquered by another nation, the hand of protection was withdrawn, and the breed died out." Savigny while in Egypt saw one sacred ibis alive. "Its extinction, therefore, must be of comparatively recent date. Fortunately it has not been extirpated altogether, like the great auk and the *Nestor productus*. It is still common in more southern regions, though driven from its stronghold in Egypt." Concerning animal life in Egypt the author thus pleasantly discourses, and with this extract our notice closes: "While my attendant is rolling a cigarette, I pause a moment to wonder what goal all the thousands of pale Egyptian swifts which are careering by can have. They pass by, but there is no check; others take their place. Can they who press on with such steady purpose stop short of Europe? Their heads are all to the north; they are flying low, like birds with a settled object. Less numerous, but still innumerable, and with the same aim, and flying in the same direction, I see a cloud of sand martins. At the rate they are now going they will soon be decimating insect life at Cairo, and banking over the pools of El Tostat, in conjunction with the rufous-breasted swallow and its distinct English congener. But all Egyptian birds are not migrants. There are the stay-at-homes, and one of these is the hooded crow, which sits in the sycamore-fig, announcing with loud caws, to all who may be interested in the fact, that she has laid her eggs; and another is the parasitic greater spotted cuckoo, which chuckles at the thought of having added one to the number. These belong to a class which is divisible into flats and sharpers — birds who 'do' others or are themselves 'done.'

"In the long grass the fantail builds her gem of a nest, and the *Drymæca gracilis*, another minute warbler, chirrups to her young ones, 'branchers' already with little bodies and no tails.

"Small rodents spring into the ditches, lizards scuttle up the walls of houses, the moving snake eyes the fledgeling, and the sly fox trots away among the tobacco plants. So great is the overflow of animal life that no one can fail to be struck by it. Only those can appreciate the scene in its zoölogical aspect who are capable of discriminating between the many species, though all can and must listen with unmixed feelings of pleasure to the chanting of the choristers and the hum of many insects, and all must feel the balmy air and fragrant luxuriance of foliage and blossom, and derive enjoyment from the view before them,

¹ Ibis, 1864, page 32.

the rock-cut tombs, the tents, the camels, the Bedouins with their long guns, the lateen sails upon the river, and the mountains in the hazy distance.

"I shall be pardoned if I next submit a brief companion picture of the prominent species to be met with in June at such a lake as the Faioum (Birket-el-Korn). First, the little long-tailed African cormorant goes by with straight, undeviating flight, like one who knows what place he wants to go to and is going there, leaving behind him the wanton terns, who have no object in life but lightly to sport over the water as they watch for their finny prey, assured that the warm sun will take care to incubate their eggs. In noisy conclave the buff-backed herons trim their nests, and the shyer squacco is uneasy at any disturbance the meaning of which he does not understand, while the cautious egret takes his stick away again, wisely jealous of revealing the whereabouts of his yet unfinished edifice. The Dalmatian pelican swims away with all sail set, or flaps and glides and flaps and glides over the water, his huge form mirrored on the surface, startling the basking fish, which hurry from the presence of their enemy. Marbled ducks in pairs rise from among the sedges; agile grebes put their trust in diving; the tall reeds quiver as the green-backed porphyrio seeks their friendly shelter; the reed warbler sounds a loud alarm. All fly to the nearest cover and in those thick beds they find a secure haven."

BOUCARD'S CATALOGUE OF BIRDS.¹—This useful list gives the names and localities of all known living birds, numbering 11,030 species in 2456 genera, though in the author's opinion "many of these genera and species must be eventually abolished." The subgenera are placed as genera, and M. Boucard believes that it does harm to ornithological science "to multiply the genera and the subgenera, as it has been the practice to do lately." The classification followed is a new one, beginning with the *Struthionæ*, the lowest living forms, and ending with the humming-birds, which the author regards as the most recent and probably the most perfectly organized birds. Four new "orders" are proposed, namely, *Palamedeæ* for *Palamedea*, *Chauna*, and *Ischyornis*; *Pterocles* for the *Pteroclidæ*; *Phænicopteri* for *Phænicopterus*; and *Trochilæ* for the humming-birds. As a check-list for exchanges and arranging museums we doubt not the book will be found to be very convenient.

THE WILD FLOWERS OF AMERICA.²—It is a singular fact that many of our more common and beautiful wild flowers have never been figured, and we are glad that in the present series an attempt is to be made

¹ *Catalogus Avium hucusque Descriptorum*. Auctor ADOLPHUS BOUCARD. Londini. 1876. For sale at 35 Great Russell Street, London, W. C.; and by S. C. Cassino, Salem, Mass.

² *The Wild Flowers of America*. Illustrations by ISAAC SPRAGUE. Text by GEORGE L. GOODALE, M. D., Assistant Professor of Vegetable Physiology, and Instructor in Botany in Harvard University. Part I. Boston: H. O. Houghton & Co.; New York: Hurd and Houghton.